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A CHRISTIAN CRIETH UNTO ISRAEL

POEMS

BY

HARRIET SKINNER McROBERTS

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A CHRISTIAN CRIETH UNTO ISRAEL

TWELVE SONGS

BY

HARRIET SKINNER McROBERTS

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TO

MY SISTER

I. E. S.

PROEM

FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely:

And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me FOR EVER.—Jer. 32: 37, 38, 39.

. . .

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,

And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;

That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and WILL RETURN and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee —Deut. 30: 1, 2, 3.

. . .

Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.—Isaiah 40: 10.

And He shall speak peace unto the nations: and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.—Zech. 9: 10.

. . .

And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.—Zech. 13: 6.

. . .

Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.

The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy. the King of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.—Zeph. 3: 14, 15.

. . .

For . . . unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, UPON THE THRONE OF DAVID, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even FOR EVER. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.—Isaiah 9: 6 7.

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A CHRISTIAN CRIETH UNTO ISRAEL

I

SALUTATION

Thou art the stranger, Israel, within our gates;
Sit thou, and rest thee with us, sipping our potations;
Share thou our bread and hearth, our work and our estates,
Until thou shalt return to Beulah, head of nations.

II

"SHAKE THYSELF FROM THE DUST"

(Isaiah 52:2)

I

Call thy young men and thine ancients,
  Summon thy poets and seers,
Bid them to rouse from the torpor
  That muffles their souls through the years.

II

Thy poets, enkindled at Horeb,
  Chirp loudly of western delights,
Make cause with the sins of the nations,
  And prate of "New Canaan" and "Rights."
O, Israel, bid them relinquish
  These blasphemous, alien wrongs,
And fall on their knees to Jehovah,
  And praise Him with fire cleansed songs.

III

Thy seers have grown modern and prattling;
  Their counsel is shaded and thin;
Their hearts are obese, and their tattling
  Is mainly of larder and bin.
Cry out to them, Daughter of Zion,
  To seize off their shoes where they stand;
The earth and the sun and Orion
  Proclaim God in every land,
But the Flame and the Voice in the mountain
  Tell *Israel* God's oath will stand.

IV

Call quickly thy singers and masters,
  And bid them repent and repent;
The God of thy pain and disasters
  Is also thy God of content.
The Mercy-seat waiteth thy kneeling,
  The Presence hath mercy at hand;
Prepare with thy tears His revealing;
  He promised thee. Who shall withstand!

III

HIS HANDIWORK

Dark stranger, sweet, beguiling,
Thy youth defies the years.
God made thy lips for smiling;
He made thine eyes for tears.

IV

"THE VALLEY OF VISION"

(Isaiah 22:1)

I

Mid the rush of an occident city,
The crash and the din and the roar,
Thou walkest, undreaming our pity
Who know where thou walkedst before.

II

Thine head is held high in thy beauty,
Thou walkest with orient grace;
Thy mind is devising thy duty;
An earnestness lighteth thy face.

III

Concerned are thy thoughts with the lateness
Of time; or the task of the hour?
Or dost thou hark back to thy greatness,
When God was thy strength and thy power?

IV

Dost marvel that thou wast His called one;
To tell out His love to the world?
His promises stand; He recalled none;
His banner o'er thee was ne'er furled.

V

But thou, hast thou faithfully spoken
And told of His might to thy friends?
What witness, what message, what token,
Art thou bearing to the earth's ends?

VI

O, Israel, tasks are but fleeting;
Thy soul hath eternal affairs.
Jehovah touched thee in His greeting;
And thou art content with despairs.

VII

Hast thou then forgotten to-morrow;
Thy city, thy kingdom, the Word;
Thy certain exchanging of sorrow,
For glory and home and thy Lord?

V

"FOR THY MAKER IS THINE HUSBAND"

(Isaiah 54:5)

Thou wandering, heartsick, beautiful wife,
Thy pain is grievous, thy wrongs are rife;
Thy feet are bleeding, thy flesh is bruised,
Thy lovely self hath been cruelly used.
Tormentors, deadly and hell-inspired,
Have racked thee, wrung thee, and required
Thy strength, thy treasure, thine infants' cries,
To slake their hearts' monstrosities.
But thy cause lies deeper than murderers' glee;
It lies between thine Husband and thee.
The day is coming when thou shalt return
To the land where thy hearth fires always shall burn.

Sweet, He will come for thee;
Sweet, He will fly to thee.
Open thine heart to His old, old love!
Hard thou hast been to Him,

Bent not to own to Him,
But He will come for thee
Who art His dove.

He will gather thee up in His strong fond arms,
Shielding thy form from earth's hideous harms;
Whispering low,
Whispering low,
Soothing thine heart from its latter alarms.
Bearing thee swiftly across the wide plain;
Steering thee safely across the great sea;
Back from the earth's farthest reach and demesne,
He will convey thee, sweet; He, only He.

He will actuate the way:
Horse and saddle,
Boat and paddle,
Eastern camel, northern sleigh;
Southern skiff and light canoe,
Plying out from green bayou;
Western motor, fastest train,
Man o' war and aëroplane.

This He shall order, accomplish in truth,
For His great love of thee, Wife of His truth.

VI

OLD TIMES

I

Wert thou, then, a young rebellant wife;
  Lightning quick at loving,
Lightning quick at strife,
Gifted, proud, repellant, radiant wife?

II

Did thy youth excise thy mighty Lord;
  Petulantly turning
From His Word;
Treating with defiance thy great Lord?

III

Who can be as merciless as youth;
Who can reap such bitter, bitter ruth!
Tears? Ah, sad has been thy roaming;
Heaven on earth will be thy homing.

VII

"THE REDEEMER SHALL COME TO ZION"

(Isaiah 59:20)

I

If one great day, O princess, there should burst across
the sky
From east to west that flaming light which you ex-
pect, and I,
(For we have read the Oracles of God Who cannot lie;)

II

And swiftly all the firmament should lift aside her
blue,
And host on host of shining figures sweep into our view,
A coming company, resplendent, and ineffable of hue;

III

(If I were there, who should not be,
For otherwhere shall Christian be;)

IV

We two should fall upon our knees in rapture, souls elate,
Aware that when we dared look up to brilliance, consummate,
We should behold a Person in the midst of God's estate.

V

And soon God's grace would bid us look, and, kneeling side by side,
Our gaze should greet Messiah, King, Redeemer, glorified;
His face with Jewish lineaments, and pierced hands and side.

VIII

APOLOGIA

WHAT shames were done thee, what despite
  Was offered thee in bygone years;
What crimes were conjured in that night,
  The grim "Dark Ages," black with fears!

In every time and every fashion
  Thou hast been hurt by guilty hands,
When men of dark reptilian passion
  Have sought thee out in hateful bands.
(Behold the morn when each at Judgment stands!)
  But self-styled CHRISTIANS, hard and cruel,
Dared feed thee to the rack and flame;
  Consigning thee as human fuel
In *His dear Name;* in His dear Name
  Who loved thee well enough to die for thee;
  (Who loved me well enough to die for me).

These horrid blasphemies congeal the heart,
And every humble Christian in the earth
  Declares with trumpet voice to Israel

That all who dealt thee pang and pain and death
In Christ's great Name, were hideous traitors, fell.

Their venoms shall be every one reviewed,
(Thy wounds, thy moans, thy gurgling deathly cries)
When He returns to take His Kingly throne;
Messiah, Christ, God's great Beatitude.
The opened books will greet His searching eyes;
And then, fair princess, then shall He alone
Avenge His loved, His Israel, His own.

IX

PALESTINE

I

There is a land,
A little land
If meted by man's measure;
Where thorn and rust
And desert dust
Comprise its troven treasure.

II

But of that land,
That little land,
The Lord of hosts hath spoken;
He hath esteemed
For His redeemed
This country His own token.

III

In that great age
To come, God's sage
Declareth by the Spirit,

That that small land
Shall burst the band
Of sin. Let faithless jeer it!

IV

Instead of thorn,
Messiah's morn
Shall see the fir and flower;
And latter rains
Shall drench the plains,
And fruit shall sing God's power.

V

There is a land,
A little land
Where One walked in His sorrow;
But every song
Of earth's great throng,
Shall hail Him King to-morrow.

X

THE TROUBADOUR

I

Israel, I sing to thee in love;
Israel, I sing to thee of love;
And always, only, of thy Lover.
To thy low wide-flung casement I have come,
And seem to read consent in that bowed head,
To twang and pipe in tender oldenwise,
At twilight. Hear me then, while evening skies
Draw cooling veils across the clover.

II

Long time, the world hath cried to thee thy sins;
But who am I, and who is he that wins
A judge's office over thee?
Thy sins are grievous, black, from hardened heart;
My sins are grievous, black from hardened heart;
Our God is Judge; He shall decree.

III

I sing in praise of thine old matchless souls;
That giver of God's Law, whose breath extolls
The majesty of God, His might;
That deathless prophet, cleansed with altar fire;
Those three at Gentile courts who might expire,
But praised God truly, day and night.

IV

I sing thy later God-taught, God-swept souls,
Who shall reign with the Son until earth rolls
Her cloak, and share His kingly part:
That Tarsus bigot, versed and erudite,
Who stoned a praying few with furied might,
Until a Voice rang through his heart.

V

I sing thy fisherman at Pentecost,
Who spake out greater truths and greater cost;
And also one beloved by Him,
Who saw on Patmos God's eternal plan:
The things that were, that are, that shall be, unto man;
Beloved of Him, beloved of Him.

VI

I sing thy folk that followed and believed;
I sing thy virgin who God's Son conceived;
I sing thy shepherds on their knees;
Thy rich young ruler, seeking life and light,
Receiving vastest truth at quiet night;
Thy women with their ministries.

VII

But, last and first, I sing of Him Who died,
Who gave Himself to be the Crucified.
Behold the offered Lamb of God!
His blood atoneth for thy sins and mine,
His blood atoneth for my sins and thine,
If we but sprinkle it upon the posts
Of our poor hearts, and join the ransomed hosts.

XI

THE HOLY CITY

I

Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
  We know thy glorious past;
We know thy fateful present
  In a dusk that shall not last;
We know thy radiant future,
  When God's dial marks the hour;
And thou shalt be the regnant queen,
  The city of His power.

II

Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
  The marts of every land
Shall pour their wares into thy stores,
  And art shall seek thy hand.
Grave science and sweet laughter
  Shall cross seas to walk thy streets;
The nations shall go forth to thee,
  And all the nations' fleets.

III

Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
The time in on the way
When queen of cities thou shalt reign,
And all the earth shall say:
"O, come, let us go unto her,
Our fond allegiance tell;
Messiah hath come back to rule,
The King of Israel."

XII

"HIS FEET SHALL STAND IN THAT DAY UPON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES"

(Zechariah 14:4)

I

Thou beautiful eastern princess,
Who walkest through every land,
With head bent low at thine ingress,
But raised at the touch of a hand
(A friendly, considerate, hand);

II

A miracle, thou, to the seeing;
God's power in Thee is inwrought;
Thy strength and thy separate being
Reveal His o'ershadowing thought;
His loving, omnipotent, thought.

III

A prophecy, thou, to the kneeling
Who look for their Saviour's return.

He cometh with balm for thy healing;
For thee, His first love, He doth yearn;
Sweet princess, for thee He doth yearn.

IV

He cometh to raise thee to splendor,
To banish thy pain and thy grief;
To soothe away all thy long weeping,
In love that shalt win thy belief;
Thy late but exalted belief.

V

At hour of thy sure extirpation,
He cometh with might from God's throne;
He cometh to vanquish the nations
That seek to destroy thee, His own,
His long loved and long cherished own.

VI

Then thou shalt discover His wound prints,
And mourn in the heart of thine heart,
That thou didst not honor His province
In days when He suffered, apart;
The Just for the unjust, apart.

VII

But when thou perceivest His power,
Thy soul shalt sing out in surprise;
"My *Lord*, and my Love of the bower,
A veil hath been swept from mine eyes,
My raptured and worshipping eyes."

VIII

Thou royal, mysterious, maiden,
An exile from home over long,
Thine heart hath been cruelly laden,
But He cometh soon with a song;
Thy King to His love, with a song.

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